



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR

Stephen D. Isler

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)

Amanda M. Dewey

Jeffrey Jay Osmond

Ethan D. Sweep

Worksession Minutes

June 17, 2019

7:00 pm

Present were Mayor Stephen Isler, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey and Jeffrey Jay Osmond. CM Ethan Sweep had an excused absence. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Clerk Kerstin Harper and citizens.

1. Agenda

The review of the Council's mid-monthly e-newsletter was added to the agenda.

2. Announcements

School is out and more activity will take place out of doors. Residents are reminded to lock their cars as there continue to be many thefts from vehicles. Mayor Isler attended a 95th anniversary celebration of North Brentwood and had a great time. The Berwyn Heights U-15 soccer team competed in two soccer tournaments and won 2nd place in both. At the upcoming MML conference, CM Dewey will moderate an "Effective Meetings" workshop. Last Friday, she attended a meeting of the Pepco Community Advisory Board, where electric vehicle technology and other interesting topics were discussed.

3. Discussion Items

All in one fee & fine schedule: TM Broadbent provided a draft comprehensive fee & fine schedule and accompanying ordinance and resolution to effectuate the consolidation of current fee and fine schedules attached to or embedded in various ordinances into one document. Wherever a specific dollar amount is mentioned in an ordinance it was transferred into the comprehensive fee & fine schedule, leaving only a reference about extant fees and fines in that ordinance. The Ordinance effecting the change will also require the annual review with a public hearing of the comprehensive fee & fine schedule, but at this point no changes to the amounts of any fee or fine were made. In the future, the Council may want to undertake the codification of all its ordinances. This would combine the currently stand-alone ordinances into chapters organized by topic that are part of one Berwyn Heights code.

Walkable, bikeable Berwyn Heights plan: Mayor Isler invited Drew Carlisle, 57th Avenue, to present his ideas for a more walkable and bikeable Berwyn Heights. Mr. Carlisle said he started to think about how to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Berwyn Heights when the Council held a public hearing on parking restrictions in the 8900 block of 60th and 58th Avenues to ease congestion during rush hours. He has since interviewed some 25 residents about walking and biking improvements and received a variety of comments and suggestions. Suggestions ranged from adding sidewalks, bike lanes and better street lighting to implementing traffic cameras, speed humps and parking restrictions. He also received comments saying that the Town is already perfectly walkable and bikeable. A greater discussion needs to

be had because people disagree on what should be done.

Mr. Carlisle said Berwyn Heights already uses traffic signs to regulate how a road is used. He thinks traffic regulations should aim to minimize conflict between motorized and non-motorized forms of transportation. This could be accomplished by redirecting vehicular traffic away from some to encourage walking and biking to popular destinations, such as the stores located along and across Greenbelt Road, schools and recreational facilities. Several people expressed interest in serving on a task force if it had a more formal framework. The Council would likely decide what kind of structure is appropriate for such a group.

In discussion, Mr. Carlisle, CM Dewey, TM Broadbent, Clerk Harper and Mr. Ventura made the following points:

- The redevelopment of Beltway Plaza might be leveraged to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Greenbelt Road.
- A walkable, bikeable Berwyn Heights plan should aim to make infrastructure improvements over time as road projects or other opportunities come up.
- A survey of residents relating to a walk-bike plan might be combined with other topics on which outreach is desired, e.g. the decennial census, education issues, etc.
- Seminole Street might be considered for a ‘Neighborhood Greenway’ as an alternative to walking or biking along Greenbelt Road.
- Many bike-ped improvements could be low cost signage solutions.
- The Town’s authority to review plans is limited and it may have to defer to the County or State to approve bike-pedestrian facilities.
- A citizens’ commission should include stakeholders from schools, athletic clubs, police and others to study best practices, grant funding, plan review authority, and coordination with local agencies in formulating a plan.
- Maryland Milestones/ ATHA might be approached for help in designing facilities and coordinating with local authorities.
- Pepco’s program for upgrading streetlights, which was discussed with former Mayor White, might be explored in detail.

Next steps would include recruitment through the Bulletin, online forums, and at Town organizations meetings and events. It was agreed that the Council work on defining the framework for the task force and clarify desired outcomes starting at the next worksession.

Four Cities agenda: Mayor Isler said that Berwyn Heights will host the next Four Cities meeting on July 24 and should start thinking about an agenda. The Council discussed the format of the meetings and agreed they should focus more on issues that require action instead of updates on old initiatives. Presentations from experts and local government officials were deemed helpful in moving matters forward. Proposed agenda items included: Presentation by Pepco’s municipal liaison Jerry Pasternak regarding electric vehicle charging stations; Update on Board of Education activities by Joshua Thomas; Update from County Council Representative Dannielle Glaros.

4. Mid-monthly E-Newsletter

Mayor Isler provided a draft e-newsletter for June, containing proclamations adopted at the Town meeting, and articles on the backpack project and Latino outreach initiative, plus a link to a Washington Post article on Berwyn Heights. Announcements of Town Office closings for July 4, 5 and 12; the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and the Walkable, Bikeable Berwyn Heights Plan were added.

5. Minutes

CM Dewey moved and MPT Papanikolas seconded to approve the April 15 worksession minutes. The motion passed 2-0-2, with Mayor Isler and CM Osmond abstaining. The May 20 worksession minutes were reviewed. CM Osmond moved and MPT Papanikolas seconded to table the minutes because they appeared to be incomplete. The motion passed 4 to 0.

6. Department Reports

Mayor Isler reported that Berwyn Heights Police is doing their job patrolling and keeping the Town safe. CM Dewey announced that the street sweeper is in Town next week. A Pepco Energy Assistance Workshop is scheduled for June 19 at the Fairmont Heights Municipal Center to help low income citizens to pay their electricity bills. The Volunteer Appreciation Dinner is on June 17 and the Susan Jones Jazz Quartet concert on June 27. CM Osmond encouraged residents to keep reporting violations, which helps the Code Department address problem properties.

6. Town Council Schedule

The Council reviewed the Council calendar. No changes were made.

7. Citizens Discussion

Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, continued to discuss the electric vehicle charging stations. The cost to fully charge an electric vehicle is approximately \$4.80, depending on the model, or \$540 per year for the average user. This is not a trivial amount and he thinks the Town should not provide free fuel for drivers of electric vehicles.

Mayor Isler said that Mr. Ventura has brought this topic up repeatedly and the Council has made clear its position and its intent to monitor the cost of the program. He asked what else Mr. Ventura would like the Town to do that is not being done. Mr. Ventura replied he would like the Council to do more research on the cost of a new program before making a decision the next time. To him it looks as if the Council was not fully aware or did not care much about the costs.

CM Dewey, speaking for herself only, said nothing Mr. Ventura just said is surprising to her. She never assumed electricity is free or that the charging stations don't cost the Town anything. She supports the program because to her the cost is worth incentivizing sustainable transportation. She might change her mind if the program turns out to cost thousands of dollars after a year of operations. TM Broadbent added that staff has looked at the spec sheets and possible costs before signing up for the free charging stations. The Council and the Town have done their research.

Drew Carlisle, 57th Avenue, asked if the Town has taken any steps to address the congestion problems on 60th and 58th Avenue at the intersection with Greenbelt Road. He was told that the Police is exploring options. No decision has been made.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk